

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 recites,

“said clamper comprises a pushing frame that abuts on said parting surface of said female mold via said decorative sheet when said decorative sheet is pressed and fastened, and at least one connecting member connecting said pushing frame and means of driving said pushing frame, wherein:

said clamper is formed in such a shape that, when said pushing frame is in abutment with said parting surface of said female mold, there is established a space between said connecting member and said parting surface in which said clamping devices can pass through.” (emphasis added)

In the February 6, 2009 Amendment, Applicant argued as to why Oono fails to teach or suggest the claimed space. In the current Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Oono fails to disclose the claimed space, but now contends that Kobayashi cures the deficient teaching. Specifically, the Examiner refers to the sheet guide grooves 82 of Kobayashi and maintains that it would be obvious to provide such grooves in the molding apparatus of Oono (pg. 5 of Office Action). As shown in Figure 2 of Kobayashi, however, the alleged space 82 is not provided between the parting surface 31c and the connecting member (portion of element 50). Rather, the sheet guide grooves 82 (alleged space) are formed *within* the female mold 30 itself and thus form a cavity within the female mold 30. Thus, when the sheet clamp 50 is in abutment with the parting surface 31c, there is no space actually “established” between the two elements, as recited in claim 1. In other words, the sheet guide grooves 82 are not established by having the two elements in abutment and since the grooves are formed within or inside the female mold 30, the alleged space is not formed, in any manner, by the parting surface 31c itself.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that even if one skilled in the art were motivated to provide the sheet guide grooves 82 of Kobayashi into the device of Oono, such grooves would

be provided inside mold 2 at a position *behind* the alleged parting surface 2b (see Fig. 16 of Oono). Thus, the claimed space would not be established by the alleged combination.

Furthermore, claim 1 recites, “said transport chuck comprises two clamping devices by which both side edges of said decorative sheet can be clamped.”

The Examiner acknowledges that Oono does not disclose a transport chuck that has two clamping devices that clamp both side edges of the decorative sheet. Accordingly, the Examiner refers to elements 88 and 88a of Kobayashi. In Kobayashi, the pull chuck 86 transfers sheet 15 (para. [0029], [0033] and [0036]). Elements 88, 88a are guided into sheet guide rails 81 in order to set the sheet along the dented parting surface of the female mold 30. Applicant submits that elements 88, 88a have no function of transferring the sheet by clamping as claimed and therefore fail to cure the deficient teachings of Oono.

At least based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references.

B. Claims 2-4

Applicant submits that claims 2-4 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency and/or incorporation of the features of claim 1.

C. Claim 5

Applicant submits that claim 5 is patentable for at least analogous reasons as claim 1.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
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Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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